



CABINET FOR HEALTH  
AND FAMILY SERVICES  
— Department for —  
Community Based Services

October 2021

# The Vision

Marta Miranda-Straub, Commissioner

## Care Circles offer us emotional well-being

**I**ntentional, comprehensive and radical self-care is paramount to our physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. I regularly encourage in our virtual meetings and in the resilience workshops I facilitate to build a circle of support. Three to five core colleagues and/or friends that we can rely on to share our concerns/stressors. Supportive, open and honest relationships are essential to nurturing our mental health and wellbeing. The circle helps us carry the

burden of our work and life as we struggle with a pandemic, the grief of lost ones, low capacity workforce and the continuous trauma that our clients face and we help to steward.



### From the Commissioner

You most likely already have deep bonds with a few individuals that can easily be recruited to become your Care Circle.

*Read the story [here](#)*

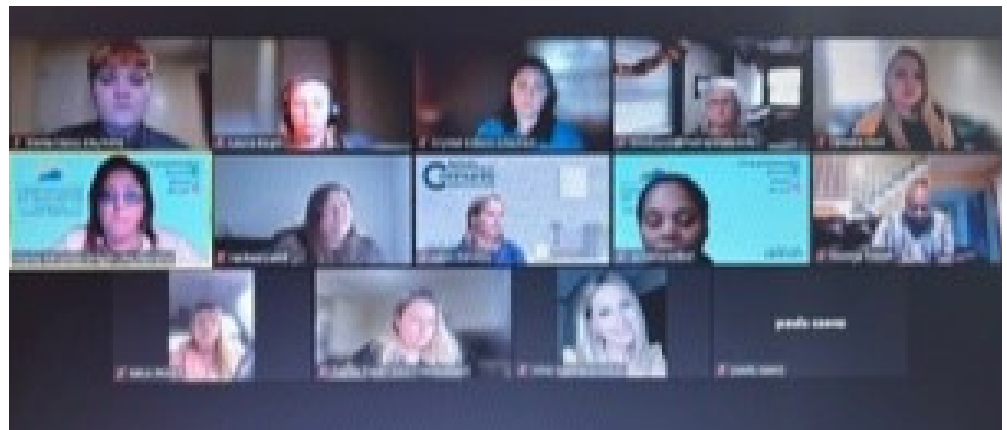
## Michele Myneer named Superhero

Congratulations to our latest Superhero, Michele Myneer, a Family Services Supervisor in Northern Bluegrass!

*Read the story [here](#)*



Michele Myneer



## Foster alumni work improves policy

Leadership from the Commissioner's Office and the Division of Protection and Permanency met with the Voices of the Commonwealth (VOC) foster youth and alumni organization in early October to discuss their current and upcoming work around policy and legislative changes affecting youth in Out of Home Care.

The VOC is working with Aetna Better Health of Kentucky toward expanded access to medical care and history files, working with the cabinet to update foster parent trainings and in the preliminary development of a foster home rating system, and are interested in expanding the Foster Child's Bill of Rights during the next legislative session, which begins Jan. 4, 2022.

The VOC is an instrumental partner to DCBS as they are a strong, effective voice expressing the needs and desires of kids with lived experience in the state's custody.

Learn more about VOC's programming and resources [here](#).

# Equity ABC Corner: An Introduction

Welcome to Equity ABCs, a monthly corner in our DCBS newsletter written by me, Dr. Brandy Kelly Pryor, Health Equity Advisor for DCBS and Founder of BKP Strategies.

At BKP we developed a program tool, E is for Equity: Equity ABCs, and I am excited that is a part of the work I get to bring to DCBS.

A few months ago Commissioner Miranda-Straub mentioned the work we would be doing together and one of those items is building relevant language to help normalize our practice of equity and more specifically health equity.



**Dr. Brandy Kelly Pryor**



## Equity, Social and Economic Justice

What does equity really mean? What is health equity? I can hear your questions and that's what this corner is about, to break it down, every step of the way. Answers to your questions will be right here but I need your help.

This is how...

*[Read the story here](#)*

### CFSR PIP FOCUS ITEMS



#### ❖ Safety

**Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. Item 2:** Did the agency make concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after reunification?

#### ❖ Well being

**Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. Item 13:** Did the agency make concerted efforts to involve the parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing?

**Item 15:** Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child(ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals?



## Fundraisers raise money for charities

The KECC 2021 Campaign is underway, and there are so many opportunities to participate this year! The mission of KECC is to improve lives and strengthen Kentucky communities by investing in Basic Needs, Family Stability, Education, and Health for every Kentuckian!

DCBS has a goal to raise \$5,500 and we have already raised \$1,680 dollars through payroll deduction, \$860 through the KECC DCBS Weight Loss challenge, and \$30 through the DCBS Employee Cookbook sales.

Ready to participate? Check out our list of campaigns to get active!

*[Read the story here](#)*

## Statewide PIP Forum offers platform for idea exchange

The Statewide FSOS PIP meeting was Sept. 10 and provided an opportunity for DCBS service regions to share best practices on PIP items and associated action plans. Approximately 300 members of DCBS management participated in the statewide forum. Key points of discussion included: Connecting the Dots to CQI, the 5 Pillars in Strategic Planning, Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and the connection to casework, CFSR/PIP Items that Kentucky is focused on improving outcomes (see above). Kentucky continues forward motion in both educating on and supporting improved outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being to best serve the Commonwealth.

# Stars aligning for prevention work

Over the past few months, The Vision newsletter has included information about the Thriving Families, Safer Children initiative, the statewide Prevention Collaborative, and additional budget appropriations for prevention work. Although it is still early in our prevention journey, this is a great time for an update on progress and alignment of these efforts.

Implementation of the requirements of the Family First Prevention Services Act was Kentucky's first significant step on its prevention journey. Kentucky truly was a national leader for prevention in child welfare, being one of only a few states to implement on October 1, 2019.

Even as recently as June of 2021, only 10 other states and Washington DC had an approved Family First Five-Year Prevention

Plan. Being an early implementer of the Family First requirements allowed Kentucky to leverage federal Title IV-E funding for prevention for the first time ever. Historically, this funding has only been available for use for out of home care, adoption and training costs.

Now almost two years into implementation, the impact of this additional funding and expansion of prevention services is apparent in the relative savings on out of home care costs and the impact on our out of home care numbers.



## Family Children and Youth

*Read the story [here](#)*



## iFoster provides tech gear to youth in SKY program

iFoster and SKY - Kentucky's managed care program serving youth in out of home care, those receiving adoption assistance and others - are providing youth in care and transitioning with cell phones and laptops through the Aetna Connections for Life Program. Spread the word to youth and families and their caseworkers. Learn more [here](#).

## Staff Open Enrollment ends Oct. 29

Kentucky Employees' Health Plan members have until Friday, Oct. 29, to enroll in a health insurance plan for 2022. Go to [khris.ky.gov](http://khris.ky.gov) and click on "Open Enrollment" to start the process. You can review the Benefits Selection Guide [here](#) for detailed information. Call the Open Enrollment hotline at 888-581-8834 if you have questions.



Deputy Commissioner  
Lesla Dennis

## Dennis focuses on staff strengths

Deputy Commissioner Lesa Dennis was recently profiled in the CHFS Community newsletter. She talked about growing up in Eastern Kentucky, her love of her family and her goals for supporting staff who uplift Kentucky families through their service.

*Read the story [here](#)*